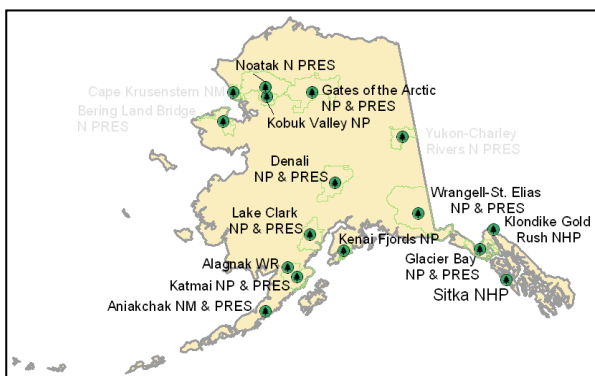




The Alaska Exotic Plant Management Team (AK-EPMT) provides invasive plant management assistance to each of the 16 national parks in Alaska. These parks cover over 52 million acres of pristine natural areas and wilderness, including coastal fjords, glacial valleys, tundra, and boreal forests. The majority of national parks in Alaska contain healthy, intact native ecosystems with very low levels of infestation by invasive plants.

The geography of Alaska makes invasive plant management strategies more difficult than in the lower 48. Most parks have little or no road access; multiple dispersed backcountry uses such as concessionaires, subsistence, airstrips, or public use cabins; and expensive travel costs, in some cases to simply arrive at a park boundary. This is the main reason why the program dedicates individual staff members and resources to select parks for entire season. This structure improves the local knowledge base, reduces the amount of resources being directed towards travelling between parks, and more efficiently manages front country infestations.

The low level of infestation and grand scale of the landscape allows the AK-EPMT to focus on two primary goals: 1) Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) of new invasive plant populations, and 2) education and outreach.



The 2010 field season was especially productive for the AK-EPMT, thanks in large part to two American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects which funded various youth hires (internships and AmeriCorp crews) to assist with invasive plant management. All together these projects produced over 17,000 youth works hours, almost two thirds of the total youth hours for the entire NPS in Alaska.



Figure 1. Alaska EPMT staff and an ARRA funded SAGA crew at Wonder Lake in DENA - 6/28/2010.

This increase in person hours – a 100% increase over 2009 efforts – allowed the AKEPMT to greatly increase the amount of EDRR activities performed on the ground. EDRR is particularly important in Alaskan parks given the large scale of the landscapes being managed and the pristine nature of many of the ecosystems found within the parks. Two key EDRR accounts from this season are in Wrangell-St. Elias (WRST) and Katmai (KATM) National Park and Preserves. .

In WRST, the 2010 AK-EPMT crew was able to inventory or monitor over 1,400 acres – a 500% increase over 2009 efforts. The crew was able to access backcountry public use cabins, trails, and airstrips that had never been surveyed for

invasive plants before. Most areas were still in pristine condition but several airstrips had small infestations that were immediately treated. These airstrips are commonly used by subsistence users and concessionaires and the infestations could easily have been transported to more remote locations in the park had they not been discovered and controlled.



Figure 2. The Alaska EPMT uses a wide variety of methods to inventory for invasive weeds – KLGO 6/10/2010.

The 2010 season was the first time AK-EPMT staff was stationed at KATM. These staff members focused on inventory and EDRR efforts around the popular Brooks Camp area of the park. During the course of their season they discovered three invasive species that had never been documented within the park before: bird vetch, fall dandelion, and narrowleaf hawksbeard. These infestations were all still relatively small and were controlled immediately after detection.

These increased efforts at all parks this season will greatly increase the efficacy of next year's planned herbicide treatments by providing more detailed infestation data and better allowing park managers and AK-EPMT staff to prioritize treatment areas based on species and infestation size.

In addition to EDRR activities the AK-EPMT continued to place heavy emphasis on education and outreach activities. AK-EPMT staff was able to increase the amount of outreach with neighboring land managers, park

staff, and park visitors. In participating with the Alaska Committee on Noxious and Invasive Plant Management the AK-EPMT was able to work across boundaries and share information on species discoveries across the state.

In particular this was useful in the discovery of an infestation common tansy in the vicinity of WRST and an infestation bird vetch just outside of Kenai Fjords National Park. AK-EPMT staff also increased communication with parks by engaging park concessionaire staff with invasive plant identification pamphlets and classes. This outreach led to the discovery of several new infestations of narrowleaf hawksbeard in Denali National Park by some of the Park Road bus drivers.



Figure 3. Alaska EPMT staff at WRST perform the "Weed Blues" – an original song written by the group for the Alaska Invasive Weeds Awareness Week – at the Fireweed Festival in Copper Center, AK.

Parks continued education and outreach efforts to park visitors as well. Community weed pulls, library displays, informational booths, and invasive weed games all help to boost community level awareness on the impacts of invasive species while providing information on the steps that private citizens can implement for prevention and control.

2010 Accomplishments	
Inventoried Acres	1,364
Gross Infested Acres	1,290
Infested Acres	418
Treated Acres	33
Monitored Acres	1,780
Retreated Acres	36
Restored Acres	0.053